

# Victim Compensation Connection

A bimonthly publication  
of the California Victim  
Compensation Program

February 2007

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Executive Officer

*Helping California Crime  
Victims Since 1965*

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## Silver Anniversary for Victims' Rights

*From the Desk of Karen McGagin, Executive Officer*

The victims' rights community is celebrating an important anniversary this year. Twenty five years ago Californians passed the Victims' Bill of Rights, Proposition 8, which established rights for California crime victims and incorporated them in the California Constitution.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Victims' Bill of Rights, we have an opportunity to look back and reflect on the progress made. It is also an opportunity to focus on our vision for the future.

Proposition 8 gave victims a voice in the criminal justice system, and it spelled out a victim's right to recover losses through restitution. Thanks to the Victims' Bill of Rights and other state and federal laws, crime victims and their supporters have made significant progress.

Victim compensation has also expanded significantly during the past quarter century. The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board (VCGCB), Victim Witness Assistance centers and 22 Joint Powers partner agencies statewide help make important victims' rights a reality for thousands of Californians every year. As they collect court-ordered restitution from offenders and provide compensation to victims, our programs help deliver on the promise of the Victims' Bill of Rights.

To support the victim community as it marks the 25th anniversary of the Victims' Bill of Rights and sets the agenda for the future, the VCGCB is co-sponsoring a "Symposium on Crime Victims' Rights – The Third Wave," presented by the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento in March. The first wave brought statutory rights to victims, the second constitutional rights. Victims' advocates indicate the third wave will focus on enforcement of these rights. You can find details on this event inside this newsletter.

The VCGCB is also looking and moving forward. We've completed our move to more modern office facilities that improve service to the public. We're also rolling out the new CaRES automated claims processing system. Thank you to our Sacramento and San Joaquin County partners who will soon be the pilots testing and developing CaRES for rollout to the counties.

VCGCB, like the victims' rights movement, has come a long way in the past quarter century. We look forward to serving crime victims in the years ahead.



**//**  
**Our programs  
help deliver  
on the promise  
of the Victims'  
Bill of Rights.**  
**//**

# New Automated Claims Processing System Ramps Up

## CaRES On Track for Statewide Rollout

CaRES, short for "Compensation and Restitution System," is the new automated claims processing system for the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board (VCGCB).

The system handles Victim Compensation Program claims from initial application to final payment. Currently additional capabilities are being added to CaRES, and an expanding user base is putting the system to work handling a growing volume of claims and serving additional claimants and providers.

"We are California's Victim Compensation Program," said Karen McGagin, VCGCB Executive Officer, "and CaRES will allow us to assist victims of violent crime more efficiently and responsively."

The next big step for CaRES is the rollout of the system to the 22 Joint Powers Verification Units throughout the state. These local VCGCB partners annually handle thousands of applications from victims of violent crime seeking compensation for crime-related losses and expenses, such as medical bills, dental bills, mental health counseling, funeral expenses and relocation expenses.

From the start, CaRES was designed to be a statewide claims processing network that seamlessly integrates the Joint Powers units. It was recently announced that two Joint Powers county offices

— Sacramento and San Joaquin — will be partners in a pilot project to get CaRES up and running in other locations. The assistance of these two county offices will be key to the successful deployment of CaRES statewide, said Project Manager Jim Brown.

"Testing the system and developing it further with our Joint Powers partners in Sacramento and San

Joaquin County will allow us to tailor the system to meet local needs," said Brown. "The goal for the next five months is to be fully transitioned

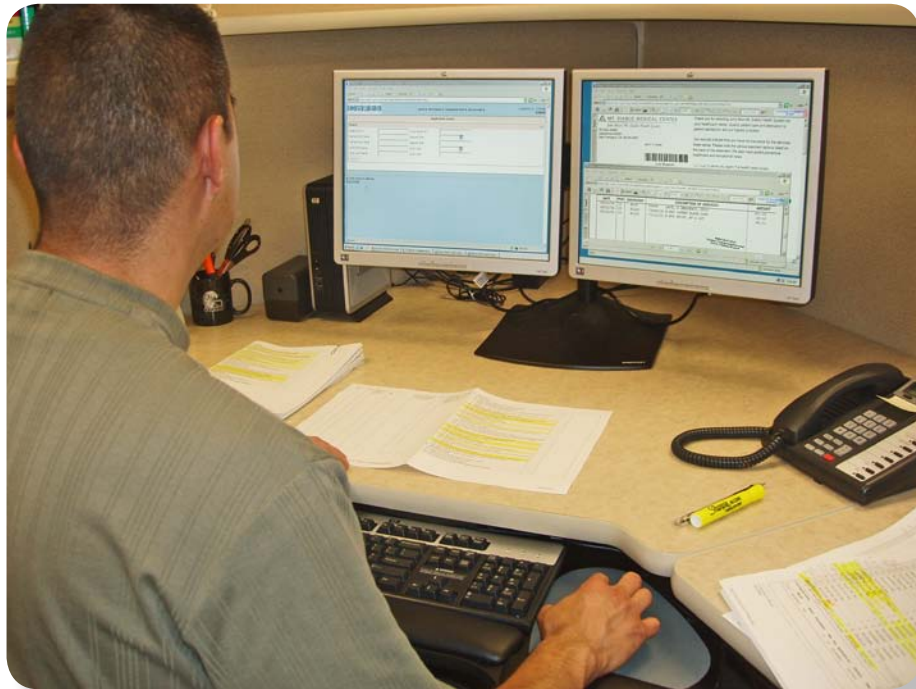
to CaRES in every phase of victim compensation claims processing."

CaRES is changing the approach to claims processing in some fundamental ways. In the past, claims were assigned to staff responsible for a particular geographic area, and they handled the claim all the way from initial application to final payment.

With CaRES, staff members are assigned to different phases of the claims process. A team will handle initial application intake, scanning documents and entering application data into the system. A different team will handle the next phase of the process, eligibility determination. Similarly, other teams tackle the next steps in the process, benefit determination and payment processing.



**VCGCB staff member Salvador Murillo views scanned victim bills as he processes a Victim Compensation Program claim in the new automated CaRES system.**



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## CaRES Benefits

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The following are just some of the benefits to be realized with the new system:

- Enhanced customer service
- State-of-the-art, distributed, Web-based application
- Intuitive, easy to use system with reduced training time
- Reduces manual entry of data
- Improved quality control and data validation
- Increased bill processing speed
- Automated payment of qualified bills, such as dental or health care bills
- Paperless environment
- Expanded appeals functionality including ability to schedule appeals hearings
- Automatic electronic interface with State Controller's Office and accounting software
- Incorporation of criminal disposition tracking and linkage to crime victim restitution information

## Who's Who at VCGCB

**Janice Patton** is a new manager in the Mental Health Section. Janice was a lead AGPA in the Mental Health section for the last two years. Prior to coming to the VCGCB, Janice worked for the Governor's Office of Planning and Research managing special projects. Janice has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice.

**Pat Valencia-Carlson** is now the Chief of the Office of Audits and Investigations. Pat previously worked for two years in the Victim Compensation Program, 12 years in the Audits and Investigations Branch, two years in the Financial Business Operations Section, 11 months in the Communication, Legislation and Policy Division, and one year as a business analyst on the CaRES team. Pat has a BA in Political Science from the University of Toledo.

**Sara Murillo** is now a Manager III for the Accounting Section. Sara joined the VCGCB on December 1, 2003, as the Accounting Manager. Prior to joining the VCGCB, Sara worked at Department of Transportation, Department of Information Technology and University of California, Davis, Health System (UCDHS) and Texas Instruments. Sara earned both her BS in Business Management and MBA at the University of Phoenix, Sacramento Campus.

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## CaRES System Ramps Up ...

A user may have expertise in several phases of claims processing. One day the staff member may work on benefit determination for many claims, the next day he or she may be assigned to enter multiple applications into the system.

According to Brown, since the release of benefit determination functionality in October, work on

CaRES has been focused in three areas:

- Addressing critical software issues;
- Incorporating change requests; and
- Giving CaRES new capabilities.

"CaRES has flexible features, such as generating customized letters for applicants, and linking up with accounting and bill payment software, so it makes the payment of claims more efficient," said Brown. "CaRES automates redundant and repetitive tasks so staff can focus on providing responsive customer service."



## At Home, In Our New Home



**At top, VCGCB has settled into its new offices located at 400 R Street in Sacramento.**

**At right, the Board holds its first meeting in the new facility's Hearing Room on January 18. Pictured, from left, Richard J. Chivaro, representative for Board Member State Controller John Chiang, Board Chair Rosario Marin, Secretary of the State and Consumer Services Agency, Board Member Michael A. Ramos, San Bernardino County District Attorney, and Karen McGagin, VCGCB Executive Officer.**



## Symposium Looks to Next 'Wave' in Victims' Rights

SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!

**EVENT: SYMPOSIUM ON CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS – THE THIRD WAVE**

**DATE: MARCH 20-21, 2007**

**LOCATION: McGEORGE SCHOOL OF LAW, SACRAMENTO  
HOSTED BY: CAPITAL CENTER FOR GOVERNMENT LAW AND POLICY**

As the victims' rights movement celebrates the 25th anniversary of the California Victims' Bill of Rights this year, it is looking to the future with a "Symposium on Crime Victims' Rights – The Third Wave" hosted by the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento.

California has been a national leader in expanding rights for crime victims. A diverse community of crime victims and their supporters has long worked together on a grass-roots level to advance the cause of victims' rights. California was the first jurisdiction in the U.S. to provide a Victim Compensation Program to assist victims of violent crime.

The Victims' Bill of Rights, Proposition 8, was an initiative that gave victims important constitutional rights, such as the right to speak at both felony sentencing and parole hearings, and the right to restitution. The Victims' Bill of Rights created new responsibilities for courts in criminal cases, and recent developments in enforcement have stretched courts into uncharted territory.

Today, one of the major issues for victims of crime is the enforcement of their rights. Enforcement of these rights has been called the "Third Wave" in the victims' rights movement and is the theme for the symposium.

This symposium is sponsored by the Capital Center for Government Law and Policy, UOP McGeorge School of Law; the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; the California District Attorneys Association; the Office of the Governor, Crime Victim Advocate; and the VCGCB.

**For further information, contact:**  
**Priscilla Dodson at (916) 739-7104 or Julise Johanson**  
**at (916) 739-7050 or [jjohanson@pacific.edu](mailto:jjohanson@pacific.edu)**

## Did you know?

- The VCGCB can provide compensation for Good Samaritans who suffer injury or loss as a result of their efforts to prevent a crime, apprehend a criminal, or rescue a person in immediate danger of injury or death.
- The VCGCB administers the Missing Children Reward Program which allows rewards of up to \$500 for individuals providing information leading to the location of any child listed in the California Department of Justice Missing Persons System database.
- In keeping with the VCGCB's Strategic Plan, Goal I: Excellence in Customer Service, and Goal 3: Excellence in information Technology, the VCGCB launched the California Compensation and Restitution System (CaRES), a new automated claims processing system that improves service to victims and providers through advanced technology.
- Of the total victim compensation claimants in Fiscal Year 2005-06, 40% were minors.

# National Crime Victims' Rights Week

## April 22-28, 2007



**"Victims' Rights:  
Every Victim. Every Time."**

From April 22-28, National Crime Victims' Rights Week will be observed across the nation by victims, survivors, and the professionals and volunteers who assist them. This year's theme is "Victims' Rights: Every victim. Every time."

To crime victims, justice means that they are heard, treated with respect, and that their losses will be recognized. Victims' Rights Week brings us together to make justice

truly meaningful for crime victims. It helps us recognize the rights and needs of victims and survivors of crime, and that crime isn't something that "happens to someone else."

Join the 18th Annual Victims' March on the Capitol on Monday, April 23, on the west steps of the California State Capitol. VCGCB staff will participate in a march from 400 R Street to the event at the Capitol.

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### Help Us Update Our Victims' Rights Week Calendar

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To provide Californians with the opportunity to participate and pay tribute to victims and their survivors in their communities, the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board will be posting a calendar of events on its website at [www.vcgcb.ca.gov](http://www.vcgcb.ca.gov).

This calendar will include those events happening throughout the state to commemorate Victims' Rights Week.

We'd like to hear about any activities your organization is planning.

Please contact Miles Bristow at (916) 491-3757, by fax at (916) 491-6439, or send an email to [miles.bristow@vcgcb.ca.gov](mailto:miles.bristow@vcgcb.ca.gov) about events you have scheduled.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### **FEBRUARY 26-28, 2007 - THIRTIETH ANNUAL CALIFORNIA POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE**

**LOCATION: LONG BEACH**

**Summary:** The California Police Chiefs Association is an organization that represents municipal law enforcement agencies in California, promoting the advancement of the science and the art of police administration and crime prevention. [www.californiapolicechiefs.org](http://www.californiapolicechiefs.org)

### **APRIL 11, 2007 - IDENTITY THEFT SUMMIT: PROTECTING PRIVACY ONLINE**

**LOCATION: SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE CENTER**

**Summary:** The internet has brought the world to everyone's fingertips – even information we consider to be personal and private. The third California Identity Theft Summit addresses privacy in the online world – from public policy issues to practical guidance on the best ways to protect your privacy from identity thieves and cyber criminals. [www.idtheftsummit.ca.gov](http://www.idtheftsummit.ca.gov)

### **APRIL 10-12, 2007 - SEVENTH ANNUAL FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER CONFERENCE**

**LOCATION: WESTIN HORTON PLAZA, SAN DIEGO**

**Summary:** The conference highlights promising practices and emerging issues in the rapidly evolving national and international movement toward Family Justice Centers and other approaches to co-located, multidisciplinary services for victims of family violence and their children. The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board Mental Health Section will make a presentation titled "Using the Victim Compensation Program as a Third Party Reimbursement Source for Eligible Crime Victims." <http://sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org>

### **APRIL 13, 2007 - TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CHILD ABUSE SYMPOSIUM**

**LOCATION: SANTA CLARA MARRIOTT**

**Summary:** Presented by the Santa Clara County Child Abuse Council and sponsored by First Five, Santa Clara County and O'Connor Hospital, this symposium will enable professionals who are in contact with children and their families to hear from experts, receive training, sharpen skills and exchange ideas. [www.cacsc.org](http://www.cacsc.org)

## **NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK EVENTS**

### **APRIL 13, 2007 - VICTIMS' RIGHTS CONFERENCE AND AWARDS LUNCHEON**

**LOCATION: DOUBLETREE HOTEL, 201 E MACARTHUR BLVD, SANTA ANA**

**Summary:** The annual Conference offers cutting edge education tracks for professionals and community members who work with crime victims, enhancing their ability to provide outstanding services to crime victims. [www.cspinc.org](http://www.cspinc.org)

### **APRIL 25, 2007 - EIGHTH ANNUAL VICTIMS' DEDICATION CEREMONY**

**LOCATION: SALINAS COURTHOUSE COURTYARD, SALINAS**

**Summary:** The annual event will honor victims and survivors of crime. After the ceremony there will be a private reception for survivors of crime. [www.co.monterey.ca.us/da/victimwit.htm](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/da/victimwit.htm)